

LADY ADELA




By GERALD GOULD

With Drawings

By WILL DYSON

CECIL PALMER

Three Shillings and Sixpence
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BY
GERALD GOULD

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WILL DYSON



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FIRST
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TO
HORACE HORSNELL

BY THE SAME AUTHOR :

Lyrics

An Essay on the Nature of Lyric

Poems

My Lady's Book

Monogamy

The Helping Hand

The Happy Tree

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

Some of the references in this book sufficiently reveal the fact that the sketches of which it is composed were originally written as contributions to topical journalism. They appeared over a pseudonym. They are here re-printed almost without alteration.

G. G.



Lady Adela is one of those patricians who travel third class for the sake of harrying the "lower orders."



"I beg your pardon,"
said Lady Adela.



"Granted," said the
rough fellow.

Lady Adela's Easter

LADY Adela is one of those patricians who travel third class for the sake of harrying the "lower orders." In summer she likes the windows shut because she suffers from hay-fever ; in winter she likes them open because she suffers from headache. At Easter it is more difficult to find a reason for being disagreeable ; but I have never yet known her fail.

She has two lap-dogs and no lap, just as some people have two tickets for every concert and no ear for music. The rest of her travelling equipment is less conspicuous. There is the Colonel (retired), an old family friend with a red face : a peremptory, pro-consular sort of man : the sort of man who pronounces "notwithstanding" as a monosyllable. And there is Lady Adela's son, Adolphus, in violet spats, fresh from the Ministry of Gas and Gaiters. Also there is—I don't know why—myself.

We had the carriage to ourselves up till the last moment. Then, as the train gave its preliminary lurch, the door flew open and a rough, common fellow got in : a ragged fellow, with a scarlet neckerchief : a cheery fellow, with a banjo. He inserted a thumb among the strings of the banjo, and indicated a melody.

"I beg your pardon," said Lady Adela.

"Granted," said the rough, common fellow.

"I cannot have a musical instrument played here, however badly," said Lady Adela.

"Eh ?" said the rough, common fellow.

"This is a railway carriage, not a place of public entertainment," said Lady Adela.

The rough, common fellow said nothing.

Lady Adela rustled her newspaper, and addressed the Colonel. "Terrible !" she cried, "this fraternising of our troops with German civilians in the occupied areas ! It is Bolshevism ! It ought to be stamped out !"

The Colonel made a military noise—something between the argumentative and the physiological.

Adolphus put up his eye-glass, and uttered. He said : “When you are in Cologne, you must do as the Colonials do.”

Adolphus is like that. Once he made a real joke—the kind of joke that makes people laugh. Ever since, failing to live up to it, he has tried to live it down. Otherwise he is a good son.

But you know how reputations stick. Adolphus is kept hard at it supplying Parliamentary leaders with epigrams. Many of his phrases have become household words ; for instance, “Wait and see,” “Terminological inexactitude,” “Calculated and characteristic lie,” and “The Cambrian hills ” are all Adolphus’s. He plans these little things ahead. Thus, when Mr. Lloyd George resigns, Adolphus will say : “All is lost save Bonar.” When Mr. Asquith returns to power, Adolphus will say : “I waited, I saw, I conquered.” When the world is at peace—but don’t let’s be silly : Adolphus is over thirty already, nor is he what is called a good life.

“These miners, now,” said Lady Adela. “Most subversive ! Most unpatriotic ! They think of nothing but money and holidays. If Lloyd George had any pluck he’d have them all shot.”

The colonel made military noise number two. This means : “If I had my way I would shoot everybody, though in private life I am kind-hearted to the verge of sentimentality ; but there would be difficulties in Parliament.”

“Parliament ! ” said Lady Adela. “Don’t talk to me about Parliament ! Democracy, indeed ! A pretty sort of democracy ! ”

“What kind of democracy would you like ? ” asked Adolphus considerately. I have already mentioned that he is a good son.

Lady Adela went through the motions of thinking. More, she must have thought. For she really produced a scheme.

"It's this voting that's all wrong," she explained. "What do common people know about Imperial problems? What can they know? Their vision is limited by the——, by the ——,"

"By the parish pump," said Adolphus.

"Don't interrupt," snapped Lady Adela (thinking, of course, is bad for the temper). "I was saying that their vision is limited by the parish pump. If they must elect somebody, let them elect parish pumpkins."

The colonel made the noise signifying "pumpkins" with a note of interrogation after it.

"Bumpkins," said Lady Adela, making a quick recovery. "Then let *those*—the elected ones—vote among themselves for a representative at the centre of things. And let the central representatives put *their* power in the hands of one or two *strong men* who will really *rule*. And, when I say *rule*," added Lady Adela, "I mean *shoot*."

The train slowed to a station. The rough, common, cheery man put first his banjo and then himself out on to the platform. Next, he inserted his head again and looked at Lady Adela for several sombre seconds.

"Bolshevik!" said the common man.

But Lady Adela never knew what he meant.



"Oh," said the Æsthete raptly, tossing back his bobbed hair from his eyes with a gesture redolent of faded youth and shampoo powder.

Lady Adela's D'Annunziation

"**W**HO is this Gabriele D'Annunzio?" asked Lady Adela.

"Oh," said the Æsthete raptly, tossing back his bobbed hair from his eyes with a gesture redolent of faded youth and shampoo powder, "he is the most wonderful of men. His sweet virility! His delicate violence! His poetic injustice! His transcendence of the moral law! His love of Italy, passing the love of women—so great a love that he goes out into the highways and hedges and compels all to be Italian, whether they will or no! He has taught us the meaning of life on the verge of death. He has relegated the Futurists to the past. He has played the Funeral March of the Marinettis. He combines the warm amorousness of the South with the cold militarism of the Near East."

"A sort of Cleopatriot," said Adolphus.

"For my part," said Lady Adela tartly, "I can't see why poets shouldn't stick to poetry. This filibustering business is only to send up the sale of his books—like an actress losing her pearls."

"Gabriel blowing his own trumpet," said Adolphus.

"I suppose," went on Lady Adela, "he'll be compelling all the inhabitants of that wretched little town to *read* his poetry."

"Fit audience found, though Fiume," said Adolphus.

"It would be a dreadful thing," said Lady Adela piously, "if his example were followed by English poets."

"There *are* no English poets," retorted the Æsthete. "Their blood is too cold. Their souls are too respectable. They have no vitality; none of the purple splendour of vice or the sea-green liquescence of despair. They are as innocuous as Oxenham. They are as dull as Drinkwater."

"Well, Irish poets, then?" hazarded Adolphus, always anxious to please. "I seem to remember, back in the 'nineties, that Yeats was said to have captured Kensington."

The Æsthete picked up Kensington, metaphorically, between finger and thumb, dropped it, put his foot on it, and conveyed the rest of his idea by manipulating the outlying features of his face.

"These geographical divisions mean nothing," said Adolphus. "The soul is its own place. There is a Kensington in every one of us. And Hampstead is as Hampstead does."

"Well," said Lady Adela, "all I can say is that Mr. Lloyd George ought to be told about it. *He'd* stop it pretty quick. There's no poetry about him. He's a Nonconformist."

She paused to consider.

"Who," she asked, "was in Fiume before this poet-fellow went there?"

"Just the usual natives of the place, I presume," Adolphus told her.

Lady Adela heaved a sigh of relief. "Oh, only the *natives*," she said.



Lady Adela explained it all to us. "These," she said, "are Morris Dancers. They are dancing Morris dances, which are so called after William Morris. You know—the well-known poet. He wrote the 'Epic of Hades.'"



She suspects their morals: she argues they must be immoral, or they wouldn't be artists, and must be artists, or they couldn't be so immoral.

Lady Adela's Art.

LADY Adela has more respect for the Thirty-Nine Articles than for the Three Arts—perhaps because they are more numerous. Lady Adela, like another distinguished person whom she tends to regard as a member of her own family, is always on the side of the big battalions.

Moreover, she had known through Adolphus, who must do *something* at the Ministry of Gas and Gaiters, a few artists.

And she suspects their morals. She argues that they must be immoral, or they wouldn't be artists ; and must be artists, or they couldn't be so immoral. She conceives of them as moving, like her arguments, in a vicious circle. She considers (she read this somewhere) that every futurist has a past, and no cubist is on the square. She says such people raise the wind by sailing near it. (She read this, too.)

In music, her taste is impeccable. She knows nothing about music really, but she knows what other people like.

The French and Russian schools are Greek to her. Adolphus says (he would) that this is because they haven't got a Handel to their name.

Literature, again—(not that Lady Adela confuses literature with art)—

Lady Adela does not approve of literature for ladies, though she knows that some women (mostly called George) have written books.

She looks upon her sex as a sort of Trade Union whose object is to keep up the price of femininity in the marriage-market : and she regards blue-stockings as blacklegs.

Adolphus once showed her some of these "free" verses—written in the modern manner : verses which don't rhyme except by accident, and don't scan except by mistake.

"Free verses !" said Lady Adela.

It was as final as if she had said "Free Love."

"Who set them free ?" said Lady Adela.

"Oh," said Adolphus, "the same fellow who releases the films."

There is something solid about rhyme. You know what to expect. Lady Adela likes to know what to expect : she likes to expect it : and then she likes it not to come up to her expectations. Such is her disposition. She enjoys bad temper as people are said to enjoy bad health.

But there is such a thing as disappointing expectation by too much. These free verses fall too short. They go too far. They are the limit, and go beyond it.

"Once countenance this sort of thing," says Lady Adela, "and where should we stop ?"

“In for a penny,” says Adolphus, “is Ezra Pound.”

But it is in the matters of decoration that Lady Adela pains Adolphus most. “I gave her Liberty,” says Adolphus; “I brought her to Heal.” (I have already mentioned that he would. He *will*.) Lady Adela dislikes these rich varieties of texture and pattern. But she has a kind thought for the pioneer of the modern movement towards decorative loveliness. And here is how I found it out.

I went with her (and, of course, Adolphus) to see Margaret Morris’s dancing children. Lady Adela explained it all to us. “These,” she said, “are Morris dancers. They are dancing Morris dances, which are so called after William Morris.”

“You know,” said Lady Adela——“the well-known poet. He wrote ‘The Epic of Hades.’”



The curate, whose mind is always inclined towards the serious, suddenly said :—

“ It is a remarkable dispensation of Providence, that Boyle’s law should have been discovered by Boyle, and the Darwinian theory by Darwin.”



“ Yes,” said the companion—“ and the law of gravitation by Sir Isaac Pitman.”

Lady Adela's Indemnity

LADY Adela has a companion—a “distressed gentleman,” whose distress is spread over her gentility like the fine, faint bloom upon a peach. The poor woman plunges into all the complications of social life with the meek eagerness of perfect fatuity. She does not so much join in conversation as contract out of it: her comments fall across it as disconcertingly as red herrings out of a blue sky.

She has a nephew, a protégé of Lady Adela's (he never contradicts Lady Adela). He is a curate; a meek, indeterminate young man, who seems incapable of making up his mind whether to go into a retreat or to go into a decline. It was to the three of them—Lady Adela herself, the companion and the curate—that Adolphus tried to explain about indemnities.

The talk did not get there all at once. The day was warm, the tea was on the lawn, no particular topic was on the carpet. The curate, whose mind is always inclined towards the serious, suddenly said:—

“It is a remarkable dispensation of Providence, and a singular confirmation of the argument from design, that Boyle's law should have been discovered by Boyle, and the Darwinian theory by Darwin.”

“Yes,” said the companion — “and the law of gravitation by Sir Isaac Pitman.”

Lady Adela did not like either of these remarks. She felt that, if certificates were to be handed to Providence, she was the right person to do it—the curate being, after all, a sort of employee of the Power he was praising. (Not that Lady Adela thinks Providence unworthy of praise: she is of opinion that anything which created herself must be fundamentally sound, even though it also created Lenin and Trotsky.) Moreover, she felt, though she couldn't quite have explained why, that the companion's answer was beside the point. Adolphus

had more forbearance, and took a larger view. He remembered (so he afterwards told me) how once, when, in a fit of blind enthusiasm, he had taken Lady Adela and the companion to see the same play two evenings running, the companion had interrupted the fourth act on the second night by exclaiming—"Why, I do believe we have seen this play before."

He remembered how, when Ilford was the unexpected scene of a sensational shooting affair, the companion had commented: "I never did like Ilford."

He remembered how, when a military friend of his, unwillingly stationed at Dunfermline, had written to complain of it as the coldest spot on earth, the companion had murmured: "No wonder they call it Dunfermline."

("Companions are odious," said Adolphus to me after that—"and as for the nephew, he ought to have been drowned young.")

"Prevention is better than cures," I agreed.)

He remembered—

It was the sort of afternoon on which memory is insistent but irrelevant. The kettle sang, and the birds. Adolphus was bemused between the muffins and the May. Not so Lady Adela, who, as I have mentioned, disliked the trend of the conversation. She affirmed, loudly and abruptly, that she was disappointed in the peace terms. She considered Mr. Lloyd George painfully slack. She wanted to know why the Germans weren't paying the whole cost of the war. Adolphus came back with a start from reveries to indemnities.

"You see," he began patiently, "there are only three ways in which Germany can pay—gold, goods, and labour."

"I don't understand," said the companion, "why they can't pay by cheque."

Adolphus became more patient still.

"A cheque," he said, "is only, after all, considered by itself, a piece of paper."

"—A scrap of paper," said the companion helpfully.

"And is of no value without a bank behind it," went on Adolphus.

"—— I know a bank," quoted the companion intelligently.

"Let us take the three possibilities—gold, goods, and labour," said Adolphus. "The gold, you know, they haven't got——"

"Dig up their back gardens, and see!" snorted Lady Adela.

"And the goods would drive our own goods out of the market, and cause our own people to be unemployed——"

"Living on doles!" interrupted Lady Adela.

"And as for Labour——"

"Don't talk to me about Labour," said Lady Adela. "I can't abide the word. The question is not *how*, but how *much*. Lloyd George ought to have demanded the maximum."

"Maxse-mummery!" said Adolphus—almost, for him, tartly.

"All the same," said the companion, "I don't see why Germany shouldn't pay for everything."

"Nor," said Lady Adela, "do I."



"A little morbid, don't you think ?" said the Dean brusquely.

Lady Adela's Party.

LADY Adela gave a party during the season. Not one of those formal parties where the guests are asked to look at the presents and the detectives are asked to look at the guests, but just one of those little casual affairs, with only eight or nine hundred invitations, where you take your food standing up for the same reason that you take your hostess's rudeness lying down—because there is no room for protest.

It was an exclusive party, and everybody was there. It is only to exclusive parties that it is worth everybody's while to go. The entertainment was evenly divided between conversation and perspiration. "Standing shoulder to shoulder against the Bolsheviks," Adolphus called it, carefully manœuvring his monocle through the crowd. Almost at once he encountered the Dean—one of the hearty Deans, whose extreme limit of daring persiflage is to allude to "The Acts according to the Apostles." Practically a freethinker: but, of course, that is the only way to popularise Christianity with the masses. He prides himself on "never talking above the heads of working men." He prefers talking behind their backs.

He is "High," and his mind is broad. But in person he is short and meagre. Adolphus says, in his coarse way: "The Dean always looks as if he had just been bitten by a kipper."

—But you *must* know about the Dean. He wrote the charming human pamphlets on the Victory Loan, which brought the results of modern speculation into touch with Christian principles: "The Loan Trail," "Bonds of Fate," and "Through Investment to Investiture"—all adapted from his sensational sermon on Compulsory Conversion.

Adolphus made the gestures and murmurs appropriate to surprise and delight tempered by resignation. He then offered his remark about the Bolsheviks—a theme that never fails with the Dean—

("He suffers from cerebro-Leningitis," Adolphus is accustomed to explain).

"Quite so," said Adolphus after a quarter of an hour. "But *you*, at any rate, have borne *your* part in the good fight."

"A little," said the Dean, waving his hand.

"A *leetle*," said the Dean, interpreting his phrase. He made an exquisite decanal gesture with his fingers, to indicate that his contribution to the nation's effort had been about two inches long, allowing for depreciation, and rather narrower than a broad joke.

"The *dear* Russians," said a literary lady who had overheard only one end of this conversation. "There is no one like them, is there? Such *great* artists. Tchekup!" She shut her eyes and yearned. "Artzibashems!" Her throat palpitated. "Zwrmski!" She leapt lightly into the air and came down on the Dean's corn. "A little morbid, don't you think?" said the Dean brusquely.

"Morbid! Oh, how *can* you?" She sketched a Müller exercise, and apologised to two or three of the more seriously injured. "Morbid? Why, their art is the very simplicity of subtlety! It is the ultimate delirium of calm! It is the release of the complex and the enthrallment of the unattained!"

"All morbid," said Adolphus coldly. "Unwholesome. Disgusting."

"Tut," said the Dean, suspicious of Adolphus's championship. "Tut. Tut-tut."

"I know nothing about moujiks really, but I know what I like," said Adolphus.

"Tut-tut," said the Dean. "Tut-tut. Tut-tuttery-tut."

"You should read Mr. Stephen Graham," said the literary lady. "He makes you realise how impossible it is to breathe the atmosphere of true Russia without absorbing its religious spirit."

"Those who go to Pskoff remain to pray?" suggested Adolphus grudgingly.

The Dean re-tutted—the unkindest tut of all.

"You know you don't mean it," was my thoughtful aid to the conversation. I divided it among Adolphus, the Dean and the eurhythmic lady.

"What doesn't Adolphus mean?" asked Lady Adela, who happened to be sweeping by. (I use "sweeping" here as a verb transitive.) Her companion was following on her train. Companions are so often at their worst in company.

"He is running down Russian literature," I explained.

"Literature!" said Lady Adela. "I'd like to know what good literature is to anybody. Give *me* something to *read*."



"Now then, Miss," he began, producing a note-book, "I shall have to ask you a few straight questions," Lady Adela bridled, but nodded assent.

Lady Adela's Sleuth-hound.

"**W**HAT I like about Scotland Yard," said Lady Adela "is its efficiency."

"Yes," said Adolphus, "If there isn't any trouble it makes it ; and if there *is* any, it makes it worse."

"I presume," said the Dean, "that you refer to the political branch ?"

"I do," said Lady Adela.

"Wonderful !" intoned the Dean. "It has its fingers on the pulse of sedition wherever the trail of Bolshevism has set its foot. Its ear is laid to the ground of complaint, and attuned to the harsh music of social discord. Its tentacles reach out beyond the shores of the civilised world, and wherever there is a palm to be won or a cedar to cast its shade, the humblest savage stands secure beneath the sheltering arm of the imperial activities of Scotland Yard."

"I meant their getting back the umbrella I left in the taxi," said Lady Adela vaguely.

"So I supposed," said the Dean crisply.

The door opened, and Groves the butler entered, his importance, as always, tempered by temperament. Quite a character, Groves. To Lady Adela's guests he is a host in himself. And, like all butlers, he has the air of having seen better days and never looked at anything else since. When he retires, I know, he will keep a public-house that won't keep him.

"The man from Scotland Yard, m'Lady," Groves announced hoarsely.

"Ah, yes," said Lady Adela—"that will be about the other umbrella that I left in the other taxi. I will see him at once." She did.

He was a nice man. A friendly, diffident, confidential sort of man, with a double chin and a treble voice. But he was nervous, and the day was hot, and if, on the Scriptural precedent, he earned his living in the sweat of his face, one could only conclude he was in a nice way of business.

"Now then, miss," he began, producing a note-book, "I shall have to ask you a few straight questions."

Lady Adela bridled, but nodded assent. The man from Scotland Yard leant forward, looked over his shoulder at the Dean, looked over his other shoulder at Adolphus, tapped his note-book with his pencil, cleared his throat, and finally murmured :

"Have you ever had any relations with a Foreign Power ?"

Lady Adela's eyebrows rose.

"I had a second cousin who was second secretary at Berlin," she explained : "but he got into the bad books of some bad bookmakers, and had to abandon his career. He was hammered on the Turf, or warned off the Stock Exchange—I really don't remember the details ; and, of course, the family never saw him again."

"Ah, Berlin !" muttered the man from Scotland Yard, writing it down with a thick pencil. He leant forward again. "Do you know E. D. Morel ?" he hissed.

"I know *about* him," retorted Lady Adela grimly. "He was exposed by Mr. Hilaire Belloc (not that I hold with foreigners myself). He has another name, that isn't Morel at all. It's Deville—pronounced 'devil.' That's why he calls himself Angell."

"Ah, Mr. Angell's a different one," said the man from Scotland Yard, rapidly turning over the leaves of his note-book. "But he's one of the same lot. I've got 'em all here. Robert Smillie—he's down ; and Arthur Henderson—he's down. All the Bolsheviks !" And he snapped the book together with pride.

"Yes," said Lady Adela. "Very interesting. And highly proper. And I'm sure I hope they will all be stamped out and then hung on lamp-posts. But that won't find me my umbrella."

"Umbrella !" said the man from Scotland Yard. "Umbrella ?" With sudden misgiving, he produced another note-book from another pocket, and instituted a swift comparison. His face crimsoned.

“ Beg pardon, Miss——or I should say m’Lady—but what’s your *name* ? ” he implored.

Lady Adela told him.

“ Well, I’m blessed ! ” said the man from Scotland Yard crossly. “ And now I’ve got to go back and tell Sir Basil I’ve wasted the whole morning ! *I thought you were Miss Sylvia Pankhurst !* ”



“Come,” said Adolphus, “think of the political changes the last century has seen.”



"There is no such thing," said
Lady Adela, "as Progress."

Lady Adela's Progress.

"**P**ROGRESS," said Lady Adela, "is the name given by the Tory Party to what the Liberal Party leaves undone."

"Yes," said Adolphus, "and by the Liberal Party to what the Tory Party doesn't want to do."

"There is no such thing," said Lady Adela, "as progress."

"Come," said Adolphus. (Fancy saying "Come" to Lady Adela! But then perhaps you don't know Lady Adela? Perhaps you never heard of Teschen?)

—“Come,” said Adolphus, “think of the political changes that the last century has seen! Think of the growth of the democratic principle! Why, before the Reform Act of 1832, the House of Commons represented less than half a million people. Now it represents nobody.”

“Consider,” said Adolphus, “the power of man over Nature. Do you think Nature likes to be bitted and spurred? Nature deprecates a telephone. Nature detests a Marconi message. Nature abhors a vacuum-cleaner.”

“Nature,” said Adolphus, “is always breaking out; but we are breaking Nature in.”

“Civilisation,” said Adolphus, “is second Nature.”

“Reflect,” said Adolphus, “upon the amusements of the people. A hundred years ago the bold, bad Byron was shocked by the waltz. He ‘spelt it with a wee,’ like Samivel in *Pickwick*; but you couldn’t spell the jazz with anything short of a steam-crane.”

“Education!” said Adolphus, warming to his subject. “Educational psychology! Macaulay said every school-boy knew who conquered Montezuma: we have superseded Montezuma by Montessori. Students used to develop a theme; now they develop symptoms. They develop themselves. This generation has discovered the self. Our grandfathers had never heard of self-development, self-expression, or Selfridge’s.”

“Psycho-analysis,” said Adolphus, “is another branch of psychology. Do you realise what psycho-analysis can do for you? By convincing you that you once thought what you thought you didn’t think, it induces you to stop wanting what you do want and start wanting something else that you are much less likely to get.”

“Economics, now!” said Adolphus. “You are familiar with the constructive work of Professor Bowley? He has analysed the national income. If the figure of the national income is to be cut so fine (it is a fine figure of an income, or at any rate, Professor Bowley cuts a fine figure), then we can’t possibly have had the great European War, because we can’t possibly have afforded it. So that’s that. Professor

Bowley has proved there isn't enough money to go round—which makes one wonder why the tax-collector goes round after it."

"I will sing to you," said Adolphus, "an old Scots ballad :

"O Bowley, Bowley, at the bank,

And Bowley, Bowley in the way !

He's broken our election plank

And proved the rich can never pay."

"So you see," said Adolphus, "there is no longer any justification for industrial unrest. Talk about the march of progress !—this is progress at the double."

"What's more," said Adolphus—and paused for breath.

"There is no such thing," said Lady Adela, "as progress."

Adolphus paused some more—for some more breath.

"And if there were," said Lady Adela, "I shouldn't want to hear about it."



A Eugenist is a man who
wants to improve the race—
by scratching all the horses.

Lady Adela's Fiction

“YOU ought to read more novels,” said Adolphus to Lady Adela.

“Wonderful things, novels,” said Adolphus.

“They fall between two schools.”

“There’s the romantic kind,” said Adolphus, “with its pretty-pretties and its prithee-prithees.”

“And there’s the realistic kind,” said Adolphus, “which holds the mirror up to Nietzsche.”

"There are sub-divisions, of course," said Adolphus. "There is the novel of sport, in which the hero skates on thin ice, toboggans on an empty stomach, and masters the not impossible ski."

"And there's the autobiographical novel," said Adolphus. "That's the easiest of all. The man who has nothing to write about has only to write about the fact that he has nothing to write about, and he runs into four volumes and forty editions."

"And there's the eugenic novel," said Adolphus, "which visits the sins of the fathers upon the children even to the third and fourth degeneration."

"The eugenicist," said Adolphus, "sets propaganda against propagation."

"I think," said Adolphus, firmly, "that I shall give up the Ministry and become a novelist myself."

"You'll do nothing of the kind," retorted Lady Adela, tartly. "If you change your career at all you'll go to the bar. All this talk of yours might be some use there."

"You," said Adolphus, "are always laying down the law : and that's why you want me to take it up. But what is there in the law after all ? I don't want to climb from being an advocate's devil to being a devil's advocate."

"You might go into Parliament," suggested Lady Adela. "All successful barristers do that."

"We are governed not by law but by lawyers," agreed Adolphus—"and a very bad thing, too. On the whole, I prefer to remain where I am. A Government office may not give much scope, but one does hear the gossip."

Lady Adela made a gesture of impatience.

"I never do know what it's all about when you keep on so," she complained. "What were you saying to begin with ?"

"Only that you ought to read more novels," Adolphus told her.

"You said more than that," Lady Adela insisted, suspiciously. "What did you mean about eugenists, as you

call them ? It didn't sound quite nice. And what *is* a eugenist, anyway ? ”

“ Oh,” said Adolphus, brightly, “ a eugenist is a man who wants to improve the race—by scratching all the horses.”

Lady Adela sighed complacently.

“ I'm glad to hear it,” she observed. “ From what you mentioned I thought sex came into it somehow.”



"I do not hesitate to repeat."



"I don't know what you are talking about," said Lady Adela serenely. "I agreed with Sir Theophilus before he opened his mouth."

Lady Adela's Politics

LADY Adela was in the Ladies' Gallery the other day, to hear Sir Theophilus Paramount on Imperial Preference. ("A good choice," said Adolphus—"he plays to the Ladies' Gallery." Adolphus defines Imperial Preference as giving the colonies something in return for what they have already got).

—But perhaps I had better tell you first what are Lady Adela's own politics. She is a Primrose Dame—(treading, Adolphus says, the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire, and wearing the yellow flower of a blameless life. But you are not to conclude she is old-fashioned. She moves with the "Times"—which, Adolphus says, is the only penny paper sold for threepence).

She is in favour of protecting British industries, because they are so much superior to all others, that they can't possibly need protection. Imperial Preference, of course!—so long as she doesn't have to drink Australian burgundy. ("I don't like the idea of wine coming from Australia," says Adolphus. "Good wine needs no Bush.") Blood is thicker than burgundy anyway—but, as a means of holding the colonies to the Mother Country, even blood is a bit too thin. ("We must grapple them to our soul with hoops of steel," says Adolphus—"that is what we mean by staple industries.")

Lady Adela wants the British lion to lie down with New Zealand lamb.

She is not really up in politics so much as up in arms. She dislikes popular Government. She dislikes the people. But her family has been connected with public life for generations. Well-connected. Her brother sits in the House of Lords; and she thinks that his seat gives her a standing. ("Personally," says Adolphus, "I prefer the House of Commons. It's so tidy. A place for everyone and everyone in a place!")

Lady Adela doesn't understand procedure, and Adolphus doesn't really enlighten her. He says: "The Speaker is called the Speaker because he is the only member who never makes a speech, and it is on the same principle that members are called honourable."

"What is a Committee of the House?" asked Lady Adela as we went through the Lobby. She spoke with what she imagined to be bated breath.

"Oh," said Adolphus, "a place where it's never too late to amend."

"And a *Grand* Committee?" asked Lady Adela.

"Oh," said Adolphus, "the home of lost clauses."

But to get back to Sir Theophilus—

—And yet again I don't know whether he is worth getting back to after all. Only two phrases of his speech remain with me, and those because of their frequency rather than because of any intrinsic merit.

One was : "I need not say——." The other was : "I do not hesitate to repeat——."

Both were true ; but then, as Adolphus said afterwards at dinner, you don't go to a Parliamentary debate for truth.

"I thought Sir Theophilus sound," said Lady Adela.

"So he was," said Adolphus. "Sound and fury, signifying nothing."

"Signifying it in the usual manner," said Adolphus.

"He has the usual manner and no manners," said Adolphus.

"He was as ignorant of Imperial Preference as if it were his own subject," said Adolphus.

"It's having a scattered Empire that gives these dolts the opportunity to spread themselves," said Adolphus.

"Happy is the nation that has no geography," said Adolphus.

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Lady Adela, serenely. "I agreed with Sir Theophilus before he opened his mouth."



“ There has been a war on, hasn't there ? ”

Lady Adela's Economics

“**A**DOLPHUS tells me,” said Lady Adela, “that there is money in this Imperial Preference.”

“There is undoubtedly money in it,” I agreed. “The question is—who is to get money out of it? Besides, which Imperial Preference do you mean? The Empire has so many preferences.”

“Oh,” said Lady Adela happily, “raw materials, you know; and control of markets, you know; and key industries, you know; and penalising the Hun, you know; and uniting the Anglo-Saxon race—you know.”

“I’m not so sure,” I demurred, “that I do know. . . . Food will cost. . . .”

“I’m not sure about food,” admitted Lady Adela. “Couldn’t we leave that out?”

“I wonder!” said I. “A bit awkward for the farmer, don’t you think, if you ‘protect’ the manufacturer who sells the farmer his implements but don’t ‘protect’ the farmer so that he can put up the price of what he sells to balance the extra price of what he buys?”

“Well, it won’t matter,” said Lady Adela, briskly. “If prices go up, so will wages.”

“As much as prices?” I asked.

“Not exactly,” she hesitated, “or where would the big profits come in? No, not quite as much as prices. If they did, Adolphus says, it would only set up a vicious circle. Some lunatic sent into the Ministry a plan for raising wages without raising prices at all; but, of course, Adolphus sat on it.” (Adolphus sits on everything: he was graded for sedentary work only.)

I tried another line of argument. “If raw materials cost a lot,” I urged, “the finished products will cost a lot, too. We shall pay more for them, and our manufacturers will compete at a disadvantage in foreign markets.”

"I don't think," replied Lady Adela vaguely, "that any materials are as raw as that."

I tried again. "But the Allies ?" I asked. "You haven't forgotten them ? Even now that peace is signed, it isn't decent to forget them altogether ; we have lent them such a lot of money."

"That's perfectly simple," said Lady Adela, "Adolphus made it all so clear to me. We are to penalise the Huns most of all—for being Huns, of course ; then penalise the Neutrals a little less—because they oughtn't to have been neutral, ought they ? And then we must penalise the Allies, poor dears, just a little, or how should we be able to treat our own Colonies best of all ? And we may have to penalise the Colonies too, just a teeny-weeny bit, in our own interests—but so little that nobody will notice it. And then everybody will be pleased. Adolphus says so."

I reflected sadly and silently for a little while on Adolphus's habit of sarcasm. Then——

"England expects that every foreigner will pay the duty," I agreed. "And it cannot be denied that the Allies are foreigners. So unfortunate. But tariffs are like ideals, you know. The higher you go, the fewer. It looks to me as if German goods would never get over your tariff-wall at all."

"And serve them right," snapped Lady Adela.

"Oh, quite," said I. "But our object is to temper justice with dividends, isn't it ? It's not merely a question of punishing the Hun ; it's a question of seeing that his punishment is profitable to ourselves. And it takes two to make a commercial transaction. If the Germans are going to suffer so much by the interruption of their trade with us, it almost looks as if we might suffer a little by the interruption of our trade with them."

"It isn't," explained Lady Adela, "to be interrupted altogether. We shan't buy their goods, but they will buy ours. We shall make them. Mother says so." (Lady Adela's mother is a dowager duchess—a duchess by nature and a dowager by grace. I once saw her officiating at a bazaar, and

I am prepared to believe in her ability to make anybody buy anything.)

I tried my last shot. "If," I said, "you were familiar with the statistics of the subject——"

"Adolphus is," retorted Lady Adela, "and he says familiarity breeds contempt."

"That," I returned coldly, "is very clever of him. But it doesn't remove the fact that certain portions of the earth which are not inside the British Empire produce, in great quantities, certain commodities which the British Empire has need of, at any rate for the present."

"Then," said Lady Adela, with decision in her voice, "the British Empire must be extended till those portions of the earth *are* inside it. There's been a war on, hasn't there?"

Lady Adela had the last word.



I looked down at my feet, and counted them, beginning from the left. There were two of them, as usual. I counted seven or eight times, always with the same result.

Lady Adela's Socialism

"**W**E must combine against combinations," said Lady Adela.

I did not dare to look at either the Dean or Lady Adela's companion. I looked down at my feet and counted them, beginning from the left. There were two of them, as usual. I counted seven or eight times, always with the same result. Adolphus, who was sitting at the piano, picked out, with one finger, what was presumably intended for a tune.

"I mean," explained Lady Adela, "these Socialist combinations of working-men. Trade Unions!"

I sighed with relief, and mopped the perspiration from my forehead. Adolphus wormed out of the piano, with all ten fingers, something which bore even less resemblance to a tune. A tone-poem, perhaps.

"That," said I to Lady Adela, "is what I thought you meant."

"Of course," conceded Lady Adela, grudgingly, "there are Socialists *and* Socialists."

"Whereas," said Adolphus, "there are neither Liberals *nor* Liberals."

"We must always distinguish," volunteered the Dean, "between Sane Trade Unionism and Revolutionary Socialism."

"Explain what you mean by Sane Trade Unionism," Lady Adela instructed him.

The Dean cleared his throat with the manner of one about to clear the air. But Adolphus got in first.

"Sanity in Trade Unionism," he said, "is judged like sanity anywhere else. It doesn't matter what test you apply: the patient isn't sane unless you get Reaction."

"I'll tell you how the whole thing works," he continued generously. "To begin with, the sky of Capitalism is clear. The workers work, the owners own, and the pillars of Society sing together like the 'Morning Post.'"

Adolphus paused.

"Then," he said, impressively, "a little cloud appears on the horizon—a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. That is Mr. Sidney Webb showing his hand."

"You remember in 'Hamlet,'" asked Adolphus, "there was a cloud that was very like a whale?"

"This cloud," said Adolphus, "is very like a red herring."

"It has," explained Adolphus, "an ancient and fish-like smell. It leads the Government sleuth-hounds astray, and darkens the sky. It presages the storm. But all the while the real storm is beating up from another quarter."

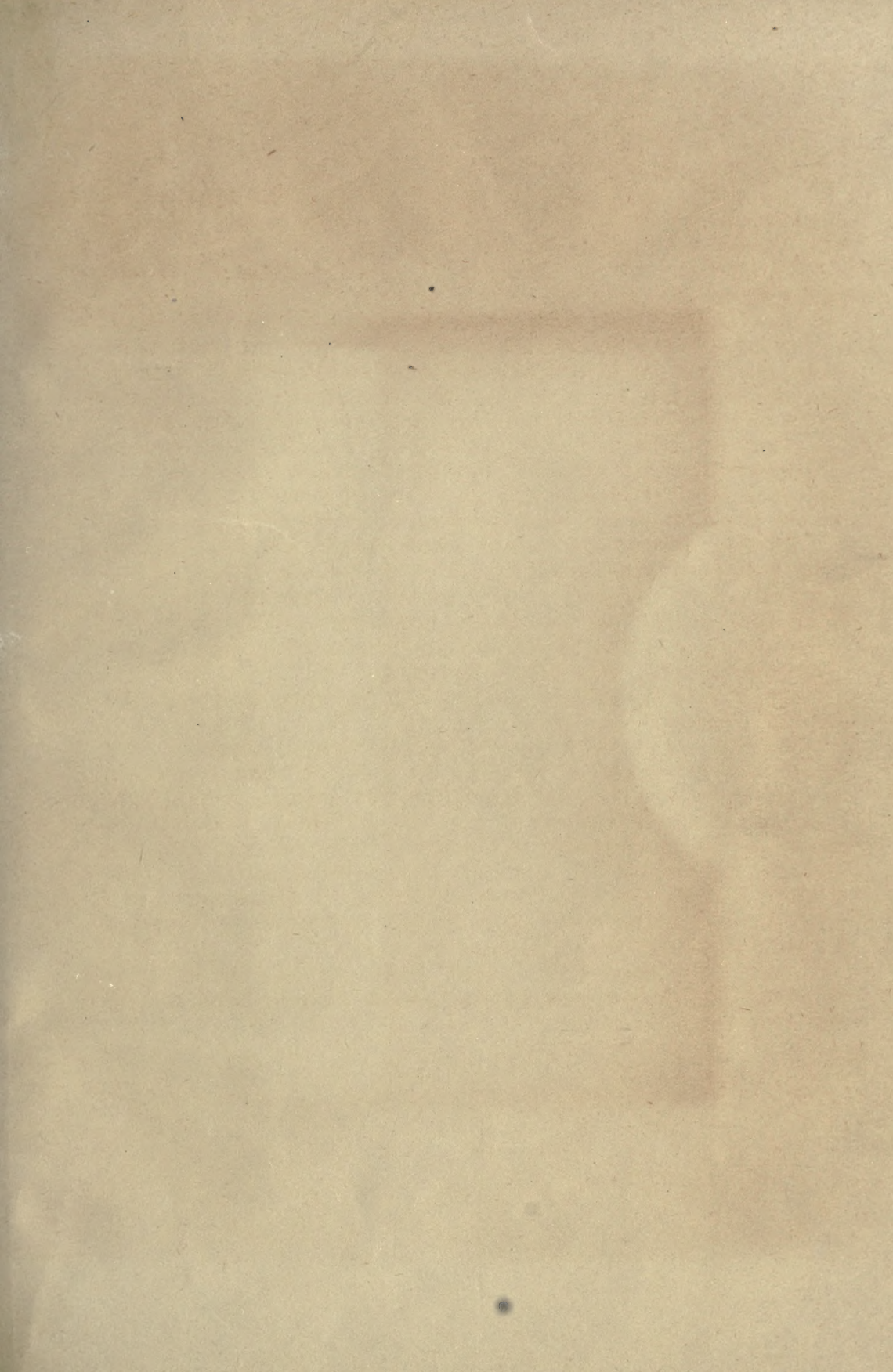
"The real storm," said Adolphus, "is advancing across Russia—Steppe by Steppe. Eastward across Siberia, where Koltchak in vain kept watch and Colonel Ward; southward across the Caucasus; and westward across the Caucuses."

"Really, Adolphus!" said Lady Adela, crossly. "You have positively frightened the dear Dean. He is not accustomed to your nonsense. And you know perfectly well that quite *nice* people are Socialists nowadays. Why, only the other day you were saying yourself that *all* young people are Socialists till they get married."

"Yes," said Adolphus, gloomily, "but then they join the Fabian Society."

"Pardon me," said the Dean with some asperity. "I think you all make a mistake in treating any aspect of Socialism in this mood of toleration and levity. You cannot touch pitch so lightly as to remain undefiled. Adolphus's metaphor is profoundly misleading. There are not two storms, but one storm: and it is a brain-storm. Scratch a Fabian, and you will catch a Tartar. I am assured, on credible authority, that the facial resemblance between Trotsky and Mr. Webb is *most* striking."

"And only yesterday," said Lady Adela's companion brightly. "I was reading that Charlie Chaplin was so like the dear Dean."



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